

Message Text

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67

ACTION ACDA-10

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DODE-00 EA-07 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NASA-01 NEA-10

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SUBJ: POSSIBLE SWISS RATIFICATION OF THE NPT

REF: (A) BERN 2860; (B) BERN 3742; (C) BERN 3867

1. SUMMARY: OUR SOURCES BELIEVE THE PROSPECTS FOR RATIFICATION OF THE NPT ARE GOOD IN SPITE OF THE POSTPONEMENT UNTIL NOVEMBER OF ACTION BY THE RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE OF THE LOWER HOUSE. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT PRESS REPORTS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE FEDERAL MILITARY DEPT TESTIFIED AGAINST RATIFICATION ARE MISLEADING. WHILE WE ARE NOT AS SANGUINE AS OUR SOURCES APPEAR TO BE, OUR ASSESSMENT THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE MORE ACTIVE THAN WE HAVE IN THE PAST ON THIS ISSUE IS UNCHANGE. END SUMMARY.

2. POL/ECON COUNS HAS DISCUSSED THE POSTPONEMENT TO NOVEMBER OF FURTHER NPT CONSIDERATION BY THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL (LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT) WITH, AMONG OTHERS, HERBERT VON ARX. VON

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ARX, UNDER AMBASSADOR RUDOLPH BINDSCHEDLER, IS DIRECTLY

RESPONSIBLE TO FEDERAL COUNCILOR GRABER FOR FOLLOWING THIS QUESTION.

3. VON ARX ATTRIBUTED POSTPONEMENT PRIMARILY TO A VERY CLEVER CAMPAIGN ORGANIZED BY AN INDIVIDUAL OPPOSED TO RATIFICATION. HE SAID THAT THIS PERSON IS APPARENTLY WORKING ON HIS OWN, BUT HAS SOMEHOW MANAGED TO PRODUCE REAMS OF FALSE ARGUMENTS WHICH, TOGETHER WITH OTHER FACTORS, PERSUADED MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO POSTPONE CONSIDERATION OF THE NPT IN ORDER TO ALLOW TIME FOR FORMAL, STRUCTURED HEARINGS.

4. THERE IS ALSO A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CONTINUING OPPOSITION TO THE TREATY WITHIN SOME PARTS OF SWISS INDUSTRY. SOME SWISS COMPANIES ARE STILL NOT FULLY PERSUADED THAT RATIFICATION OF THE NPT WILL NOT FUNDAMENTALLY AFFECT THEIR COMPETITIVE POSITION VIS-A-VIS THOSE COUNTRIES, IN PARTICULAR FRANCE, WHICH HAVE NOT RATIFIED. THERE IS ALSO OPPOSITION FROM MANY SWISS OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

5. VON ARX POINTED OUT THAT THE FEDERAL COUNCIL HAS MADE THE DECISION THAT SWITZERLAND SHOULD RATIFY THE TREATY. ALL SIWSS GOVT AGENCIES, INCLUDING THE MILITARY DEPT (FMD), ARE OBLIGED TO SUPPORT SUCH A DECISION ONCE IT HAS BEEN MADE. IN TESTIFYING AGAINST THE TREATY (REF C) JOSEF FELDMAN OF THE FMD, ACCORDING TO VON ARX, WAS ACTING AT THE REQUEST OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, WHICH HAD ASKED THE FMD TO PROVIDE A WITNESS WHO WOULD GIVE THEM EVERY MILITARY ARGUMENT AGAINST RATIFICATION. VON ARX CONTENDED THAT FELDMAN'S ROLE WAS NOT STATED CLEARLY IN THE PRESS.

6. EMBASSY COMMENT: VON ARX' READING OF THE SITUATION IS THAT THE NPT WILL BE REPORTED OUT IN NOVEMBER, PASSED BY THE LOWER HOUSE IN DECEMBER, AND THEREAFTER FORMALLY RATIFIED. WHILE THE AVAILABLE EVIDENCE SUPPORTS THIS VIEW, THE POSTPONEMENT IS A QUOTE VICTORY UNQUOTE FOR THOSE OPPOSED TO THE TREATY. IT WILL GIVE THEM MORE TIME TO ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE OTHER GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS TO OPPOSE THE TREATY. THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT THAT THE TREATY BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUBMITTED TO A POPULAR VOTE PRIOR TO RATIFICATION, BUT IF OPPONENTS OF THE TREATY COULD GATHER SUFFICIENT STRENGTH AND DEMAND A POPULAR VOTE, THE PARLIAMENT MIGHT WELL GO ALONG. IF THAT WERE TO HAPPEN, PROSPECTS FOR EVENTUAL RATIFICATION BECOME CLOUDY AT BEST. NONETHELESS OUR ASSESSMENT AS TO WHAT WE MIGHT USEFULLY DO REMAINS THE SAME (REF B). IT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL FOR US TO BE MORE ACTIVE THAN WE HAVE BEEN ON THIS ISSUE. THERE

IS NO NEED TO PERSUADE THE SWISS FEDERAL COUNCIL THAT
RATIFICATION OF THE NPT IS IN THE SWISS NATIONAL INTEREST,
AND WE SHOULD LEAVE IT TO THE COUNCIL TO PERSUADE THE
SWISS PARLIAMENT AND/OR PUBLIC. IF ASKED, AND WE MAY BE,
WE SHOULD BE AS RESPONSIVE AS POSSIBLE TO REQUESTS FOR
TECHNICAL INFORMATION FROM SWISS OFFICIALS PREPARING FOR
THE NOVEMBER HEARINGS. BUT AN EFFORT ON OUR PART TO GO BEYOND
THIS WOULD BE RESENTED AND OF HELP ONLY TO THOSE WHO
OPPOSE NPT RATIFICATION.
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